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PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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THE HEART-POWER OF THE GOSPEL

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.—Rom. I. 16.

That *also* is extremely bold. It required no small measure of courage at that time, and under those circumstances, and in the speaker, to have dared to say that, simple as it is now. There was a time when to have said, before a Hebrew audience, that the Gentiles were to have the same privileges as the Jews, would have brought down on one's head a shower of stones. The near approach which the apostle makes to this thought in many of his epistles indicates the state of feeling which existed in the olden time. We make nothing, now, of the fact that the Gospel is meant for the whole world; but there was a time when the religion of the Old Testament and of Jehovah was supposed to be in such a sense Jewish, that, if any other nation had a share of it, it was stolen. The Jews regarded it as their property. Jehovah was a national God, in their estimation. And to affirm that any other nation had privileges equal to theirs was an assault upon their pride, and upon their whole national feeling. Thus in writing to the Ephesians, the apostle says,

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles [on your account], if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery [the hidden thing, the secret], which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

What, then, is that prodigious "mystery" that has been hidden so long, and that now, with such wonderful disclosure, is about to be revealed? "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel." We almost laugh at the thought that that should be the issue, the climax, to it. We are surprised that it should be only that. But ah! at that time it meant a great deal more than it does now. And when he said, "The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek," he spoke a very bold thing.

Sunday Evening, June 25, 1871. Lesson: Matt. XIII. 1-17. Hymns (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 725, 696, "Shining Shore."

What, however, seems to our minds the most surprising is the declaration that he was not ashamed of this Gospel, and of Christ. Why should he be? What is there that one should be ashamed of in the knowledge of the truth of God, and especially in that dispensation of mercy by which God is revealed in Jesus? Is not Christianity respectable, the world over? Is it not the supreme religion? Does not even skeptical philosophy admit that it approaches more nearly to the universal religion than any other? Is it not esteemed of all men? Why should any man be ashamed of it? Sure enough, after eighteen hundred years of growth and fruit, why should any one be ashamed of it? But it was very different then. It was an unknown thing. There are a great many reasons why the apostle may be supposed not to have been ashamed of his ministry and his mission, although they to whom he spoke might have thought that he ought to have been ashamed of them. But put yourself in his position, and see how the whole world must have seemed to him. Plant yourself in the midst of those to whom he came preaching; perceive their prejudices; accept their opinions; stand in the atmosphere which enveloped him; be surrounded by the same public sentiment which was around about him, and see if there was not some courage and some loftiness in his declaring that he was not ashamed of the part that he was playing, nor of the ministry that he was serving.

He was a Jew himself; and I know of nothing that so aptly expresses what the feeling in regard to the *Jew* was, as the statement that he sustained very nearly the same relation to the foremost people of that time that the negro has sustained to the white people in this country—a relation which nearly excluded him from all influence, from all standing, and from a decent hearing. The Jew was detested then, as in mediæval times he was detested. It is only within a comparatively brief period that the Jew had any respectability or liberty among the nations of the earth. But at that time he was particularly odious among all the civilized nations of the earth, almost without exception.

It would seem an unfortunate thing that a new religion should be pioneered by a man who was a detested Jew, than whom one could scarcely have been selected in all the world less likely to succeed.

Then, add to this the fact that Paul, by his own account, had no graces of person; that he had not oratory; that he had none of the skill of philosophy and casuistry and persuasiveness. He was a Jew; and besides that he was not personally impressive. This would seem to render him an object, if of notice at all, of contemptuous notice.

And then, whom did this Jew come to make known? Not himself, surely. Nothing so vile and so unacceptable as himself. Something precious and desirable, evidently. No: he brought tidings of a malefactor! He bore knowledge of one who was regarded as too vile to be tolerated. It might be declared that he was not a malefactor; but the fact was admitted, by his own countrymen, that he had been crucified—and crucifixion was the penalty reserved for the most odious criminals—as disgraceful as the gallows-death in our day.

Paul was going out into all the world, and this was what he was carrying to the people: "You must believe on this crucified convict." It was a strange message, and you see how significant it was, when Paul pitched the battle on that point, and said,

"I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ [not Christ as he appeared in his glory; not Christ as he was to appear when he should come the second time, in the kingdom of his Father's glory] and him *crucified*."

On that Jew, that convict, that odious, crucified man, Paul planted himself, and determined to make the strength of his ministry rest there. He presented Christ in those aspects in which he would be most likely to be rejected of men. It was a bold presentation.

It is to be remembered, too, that the apostle went forth to the Greeks and to the Romans, both of whom were very proud nations, and both of whom, in turn, had been conquerors of the province; and that therefore he brought this odious message, himself odious, to haughty and supercilious listeners. The Greek had had his turn and overrun the land, and beaten down all opposition, and governed the Jews, first with a rod of iron, and afterwards with philosophy, despising them because they had no philosophy. They were without art. Painting and statuary were unknown among them; and architecture was but very little known among them. With the exception of the single instance of the Temple, almost all the remains of architecture in their cities are Greek, and sprang from the hands of their conquerors. Rome succeeded the Greeks in holding power in the province, and had her turn of triumph; and she looked upon this nation as she did upon others that she had subdued. Not only that, she looked upon them as a nation of stiff-necked and hot-headed fanatics. And they were remorselessly dealt with.

Therefore, when Paul went forth to preach the Gospel, he had to preach it to those lofty, proud, conquering nations; and there seemed very little likelihood that he would have a hearing in their presence. The theme was one which had in it no fascinating elements, so far as the carnal sense of man is concerned. It was not even Judaism, which had a temple, and an altar, and a ritual, and glorious chants, and grand popular festivals. In Judaism there

were more or less of exhibitory services. There was something in it for the eyes to rest on. It was largely made up of symbolism, and was not altogether without fascination. But Paul did not go to preach Judaism. He dispossessed himself of it as fast as he could. He disregarded it, saying, "Circumcision is nothing." And yet that was the foundation of the whole Levitical economy. He had nothing to present to the love of beauty. There is no æsthetical element in Christianity; but there is a moral element in it. I do not remember any stroke of what might be called art, or any relation to it, in the teaching of our Saviour. While he used nature, he never used it from a sense of beauty, but always for a moral purpose. The old Hebrew prophets made use of nature. They felt that it was grand and sublime. No figures will surpass those which come from nature. But our Saviour's teachings were more like the Proverbs than like the writings of the Prophets. There was then no sense of beauty in the Jewish mind, to which an appeal could be made, and nothing to satisfy that side of the mind. When the apostle came to the Gentile world, he came to call upon men to believe in an obscure person raised to conspicuity for some reason or other, and put to a shameful death. And what was there in that, which was calculated to contribute to their comfort or joy? He preached of one who said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest; but it will be by taking my yoke upon you, and bearing my burdens. Can ye drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I shall be baptized withal?" When the apostle went out to preach Christ, no shining way was presented to men. On the contrary, there were in store for them reproach, separation from brethren and households, and even expatriation, and persecution, and bondage, and sorrow, and distress, if they accepted this obscure personage as their Lord and Saviour.

Now, standing among such a people, to deliver such a message, I do not wonder that the apostle felt that he must take issue with them. They would be likely to suppose that the cause which he advocated was very weak. The seeming was that it was an imaginary thing, and that he was fanatical. Such would be the impression produced by his proclamation of the Gospel to the great Gentile world. He therefore took issue with that very point, and said, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ;" as if somebody had been trying to shame him. "I am not ashamed of it, on that very ground on which you think I should be ashamed. I am not ashamed of it on account of its power over the mind, the heart, the soul of men. To every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek, it is the power of God unto salvation. It is the righteous-

ness of God revealed from faith to faith. And this inherent spiritual power has redemption in it."

What, then, are some of those elements which we may suppose the apostle found in the Gospel which he preached, and which gave him joy rather than shame in proclaiming it? In all the instructions of the Saviour, in the whole Gospel, which includes his life and teachings, there is to me a predominant sense of the great world beyond. Nowhere else is there such an atmosphere of the infinite spirit-realm that lies just outside of the border of this world, as in the teaching of the Saviour. And the apostle accepted it as a thing to be believed. He pointed forward to it as a fact relating to the great after-life. And the Greek was drawn toward it by hope, by faith, by love, by arguments, by motives, by persuasions. Immortality was no longer a plant that grew a few years on earth, and then returned no one knew whither. Under the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, man at once had an outgrowth and an immortality which raised him incalculably in the scale of being. The conception of man as a creature of this world, is, and must be, entirely different from a conception of him as a creature of eternity. If man is born to live threescore years and ten, and then die, in what respect is he better than the leaves of a tree, that flourish through their summer, and then drop and return to the earth? If man has his whole life here, and there is no hereafter, what are the rights of the weak and of the poor? The almost inevitable and irresistible effect of believing that men's life begins and ends in this world, and that they have no life hereafter, is to give power to those that are strong, and to make the strong unmerciful toward the weak. If it were believed that human life was limited to this world, men would say, "What is the difference between an intelligent being and the horse that we do not believe has any life beyond this world, and that we task and kill, getting the most we can out of him, because we believe his existence ends here?" If it is supposed that men have no more life than the beast, then the poor and needy will be trodden down as trash, and nobody will care for them, and death will be the save-all and the cover-all, so far as they are concerned.

When, therefore, Christ came to teach that the poor were immortal; that the poorest and meanest had a chance for life beyond this world, he raised men to a dignity and importance which had not before been regarded as belonging to them.

What seeds do in this world, depends upon what their summer is, and whether they have power to go through the winter, and grow again. Some things—deciduous plants—can grow but for one summer. Other things—such as the hollyhock—grow for two summers,

and become larger and more stately. But those things which have a permanent value—trees, such as the century-defying oak, out of which we construct our dwellings, out of which our men-of-war are built, and which have enduring strength—grow on, season after season, and through successive cycles.

Now, if man perishes, he is as the grass indeed; but if he lives hereafter, beyond this world, who shall measure what he shall be? If here you take a poor, obscure man, ignorant, and full of prejudices and superstition—a barbarian, a miserable slave—and measure him, what is he to society? Almost a wart, and nothing else. What is he worth to civilization? He is scarcely a filling-up in life. What is he worth? Just about as much as his hoe is. His value is measured by his power to create; by the skill that is in his hand. What sign is there of an ideal of beauty in his soul? What insignia are there which mark him as superior to the lower animals? What can he do, poor, ignorant, untaught, and undeveloped as he is?

But ah! if that soul is going to have a chance to unfold; if, being temporarily planted here, it is to be transferred to a region where it will have a chance to develop the immortal that is in it; if by and by it shall be transplanted to a better clime and a fairer soil, where it shall have a nobler opportunity for growth, who can tell into what magnificent proportions that earth-neglected but heaven-protected spirit shall spring? Who can estimate the value of that nature which is to go on unfolding forever and forever? It is out of the infinite possibilities of this future immortality which promises all things and projects all things for the least and the poorest, that men draw installments of honor and dignity here.

See the mother sitting by the cradle, and singing to the child. He is her hero. Forelooking, she sees him as a boy ten or twelve years of age, sprightly and comely and beautiful. She sees him as a youth, gay and fair, blossoming and breaking out into life. She sees him issuing into young manhood. She foresees the time when his stalwart form shall support her in the feebleness of age, and as she approaches the grave. She sees him, also, in mature manhood, and in his declining years. He is her hope and pride.

In the midst of her reveries the child wakes up; and it cries, as an animal would cry. It is helplessness itself. It does not even know its mother. It cannot lift its hands intelligently to its face. There is nothing of it. It is a little mass of jelly and bone. Is there anything so insignificant as a new-born babe? And yet, does not the mother see all its manhood? Is there not over that cradle a glory that is borrowed from the possibilities of coming years?

And is not the mother right? He *is* a hero. She has the faith to discern the future of his life.

And oh, what grandeur there is in men, to one who has faith to believe that they shall never die! A man may be poor for society, poor for the household, and poorest of all for himself in this life—for *if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.* But oh, to have light and immortality brought to light as a measure by which to judge of men; to have diffused a knowledge of the world beyond; to have opened the crystal door of the future; to have let in a light which should change all the aspects of things, and reveal the glories of the world to come—this is not a small thing And you shall find that where there is most intelligent and righteous and permanent liberty, it is the result of the inspiration of those views of immortality which came from Christ Jesus, which have blest mankind through ages, and which will go on blessing them to the end of time.

The intensity of the divine desire for the emergence of men from the lower states in which they are born in this world into higher spiritual conditions, is prominently developed in the Gospel of Christ. All through the teaching of the Saviour I discern sympathy for men, not exactly because they are sinful, but because they are crude, undeveloped, ignorant, untaught; because they are sufferers, and are destined to greater suffering if they could not be rescued. I perceive in the teaching and character and earthly life of Christ, that his soul was attempting to draw men up from the beggarly bondage of their fleshly condition into the freedom and to the glory of a truly spiritual life. It was as if they were animals in whom manhood had begun to be developed. It was as if the heart of God was pouring down light and warmth upon them. As the sun shines on homely roots, so God shone on men. And then came the development of the Spirit, to the divine nature that was in them.

This was not altogether new. There had been schemes of something like this in other faiths and religions—for there are some elements of truth in all forms of belief; but nowhere else had there been such an emphasis given to this. Nowhere else was there ever a heart that beat so intelligently and so effectually as the heart of Christ standing in the place of God to men, and bearing witness to the divine desire that men should be inspired, lifted up, redeemed, enfranchised, ennobled, and made sons of God. What a view of God does this render to us! What a view must it have rendered to those who were accustomed to look at him with the eyes of antiquity! Listen to the description of God which is given in the next chapter:

"Despiseth thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

How sublime a view was this of the moral development of the world, and of a God that nurses the world with love! The magisterial and despotic view of God is one side. But there is another side. There had been a presentation of God as wise and just, addressed to the forceful nature of men; but the view of a God of infinite love, guided by his wisdom, opening for the whole race a door of escape from the physical reality into the region of spirituality—this certainly was a new presentation of the great central force of the universe, not as a blind fate, not as a crushing destroyer, not as a subtle Machiavelian God, issuing his decrees, but as a Mother-God, a Father-God, a Brother-God, a nourishing God, that brings up his creatures in love.

This was the presentation of God which the Gospel contained; and the test of his love to men was, not that he never caused them pain. Suffering is often a test of love. Our love to others is not measured by how glad it makes them feel. It is not bursts, impetuosities of feeling, but its continuity, the length of time that it will continue to exist when once it is set in operation, that tests its value. Earthly feelings are like rockets that go blazing into the sky, but very soon fall, drawn by fatal attraction, to the earth; and how long before it is extinguished, how long it will bear pressure, how long it will endure suffering, how disinterested it is, how much it will give—that is the test of human love; and human love is found to be very imperfect when measured by that test.

But was there ever love like that of God in Christ Jesus? Was there ever anything which so filled the measure of disinterested love as that of Christ Jesus for his enemies? Was there ever a more sublime exhibition of love than that which he manifested when, hanging upon the cross, he prayed for his crucifiers, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"?

The personality of God; the sympathy of God for mankind; the reduction of God to those conditions of humanity in which we can interpret the divine nature, and understand that divinity consists, not in magnitude, not in power, not in force, but in disposition, and that love is the center of that disposition—this is transcendent. It is the secret of the power of the Gospel in Christ Jesus.

The universe is now revealed to be a household. We know what a household is; but when we say the universe is a household, we do not mean that it is such a one as ours is. Yet to us there is no place so sweet as home. There is nothing that touches so many hearts, and touches them so sweetly, as the thought of home—a

thought that is selected as the symbol or sign of the divine purpose in regard to the race. And the universe being a household, we are taught to draw near to Jesus in all the universe and say, "Our Father." When I do this, I am knocking at the door of my Father's house. And when I have found Christ I have found him who is my Father.

How different is this view from the ancient conception, or from that modern conception which men are so desperately disposed to rush into! What can be more comforting than the thought that all mankind are a family, and that God is large enough and wise enough to govern by his personality? Men are not, and therefore they have a clumsy machinery of laws. No magistrate can govern by his personality. No man can be trusted to do it. Men's nobler impulses are so blended with their lower passions that their judgment is not a safe guide; and so, not because it is the best thing, but because it is the best thing that we in our imperfect condition can attain to, we resort to constitutions and laws. Constitutions and laws are means which are employed for bolstering the weakness of the men that stand behind them to administer them. But God stands above all these things. He governs, not by laws nor by constitutions, but by his mind and heart, saying, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. I am not tied. I stand in my own personality. I am free to feel sympathy and affection whenever and wherever I will." God is perfectly wise and just, and true and unerring, and therefore he can act without restraint. The conception revealed in Christ, of the Eternal Father, of the governing God, is that he is one who stands in the plenitude of his being, administering in heaven and earth by the power of his own regnant heart, and not from the blind impulse of law; from the liberty that inheres in his own nature, and not from any coercion outside of himself. How grand is the conception of such a God, with such a power and such a purpose, administering throughout the universe!

But there is no attribute of God so wonderful as his patience. There is nothing so marvelous in the divine nature as God's long-suffering. We cannot bear to contemplate the atrocious wickedness which we see around about us. We are repelled in a moment from things which seem to us so flagitious. Oh, what a smoke has gone up from the corruptions of this world! What hideous cruelties there have been! What wrestlings of animal with animal! What rage and fury! What lust and crime! But God has patiently borne it all. And he has waited, and still waits, for the development and purification of the race. The ages have rolled by, and

thus far the earth has borne little fruit; but it is like an orchard filled with trees that shall bear abundant and glorious fruit in the ages that are to come; and God has waited, and is waiting, and will wait to the end. God is glorious as a God of love and mercy; but he is more glorious as a God of infinite long-suffering and patience.

When we come to have these thoughts of the divine nature brought out, we see that there was good reason why the apostle should say, "I am not ashamed of such a God nor of such a Gospel. That is the message which I dare to stand before any heathen temple and proclaim."

To be sure, heathenism had a great advantage over the Gospel. All that art could do had been done to redeem heathenism from vulgarity, and cover up its deformities, and make it beautiful to the eye; and Paul had only this spiritual or ideal conception of God to present. But where it found a lodgment it led to most astonishing results. Where it was preached to the poor and needy, it inspired them with great hope and confidence. Where it was brought home to the guilty, it awakened in them such a sense of their guilt and of God's grace in their forgiveness, that they were inspired with purposes to live holy lives, and began to live such lives. And in the midst of those lives more and more of the light of truth dawned upon them.

There is no description that can fitly represent the sensations of the men to whom the Gospel came. All they could say was, "I was dead, but am alive; I was lost, but am found; I was in prison, but am released. By the grace of God I am what I am. He is my Friend, my Lover, my Saviour, my Father." Their souls were so awakened, their manhood was developed to such proportions, they manifested such hidden power, they had such faith and courage, and their experience was such, that they were transformed.

Under the influence of this blessed truth, the household was revolutionized, and Christianity gradually established itself in the earth. It never established itself by symbols and rituals of worship. These came after its decadence began. The beginnings of Christianity had for their foundation the power of Christ brought into the individual soul. When once men had been convicted of their sins, and Christ had been presented to them as their Saviour, and they apprehended him, and his Spirit had entered into them, they became so sweet, there was such nobleness in their disposition and purpose, that they were capable both of forbearance and achievement. They had those qualities of manhood which were exceedingly rare, and which were never inspired by the cunning philosophy of the stoics.

Men of no learning, no culture, were found springing up into moral sublimity. There grew up in every city bodies of men on whom the Spirit of God had descended, and who exhibited all those traits which it is the nature and design of Christianity to develop. There is abundant testimony of the triumph of noble qualities in the lives of the early Christians. No man can read the Epistles of the Apostle Paul and not see that the power which he exerted was that of regenerated character, a spiritualized disposition, and a new manhood in Christ Jesus. It is that power which comes when God's influence is felt in the human soul. Then manhood takes unexpected development. Then come, with grand disclosure, those things which men vainly seek for in other ways. They blossom profusely, and reappear as fast as plucked. And so it was this spectacle of what the Gospel does to the heart of man that filled the Apostle with joy and confidence.

No man has ever preached the Gospel who has not felt that so long as he looked at it as a mere speculation it was full of loop-holes; that there were many things in it which seemed contradictory and inexplicable. If I had reliance only upon pure intellection, I should be as a reed shaken in the wind. But I never try to put myself in the attitude of God toward a human being, I never have my heart alive with glowing sympathy toward a fellow-creature, I never feel my soul moved with an earnest desire to benefit another, that I have not an intuition, a certainty, of the existence of God and of his Fatherhood, which cannot come through any process of the intellect. God discloses himself, not through the intellect, but through the heart; he is revealed to us through our own likeness to him. And it is by this revelation that we are able to make known the lost condition of men, and the undeveloped power in them of recuperation; that we are all able to stand before men and say, "The law is that he that sinneth shall suffer in proportion to the sin, or shall die; that if the sin passes a given line, or goes beyond a certain magnitude, there is no drawing back, and no medicine or surgeon that can keep the sinner from suffering the penalty." But I stand and look that economy in the face, and say, in respect to all mental and moral transgression, that while it is true that the soul that persistently sins shall die, while there is a law that rolls men on and down to destruction if they do not turn back, yet the soul that sins *may live*. The Lord God hath declared it. And while material nature stands saying, "You shall suffer the consequences of your transgression," the heart of God stands and says, "I would not have you die. Why will you die? In me is your help and your life." The higher nature, the truest part of nature, the subtle, ineffable blossom of nature, is

that which the soul knows about, and the body does not. Away, chemistry! What do you know about nature? You take the shuck, and analyze that; but you know nothing of what the shuck contains. You have examined the dirt out of which the plant grows; but you are ignorant of the blossom in the topmost bough. This is made known only through a knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. It is a truth of the Gospel that there is remedy for sin, and salvation for the sinner; that as soon as we are touched by the Divine Spirit, we have power to rise superior to transgression; that then all the past is changed, and all the future is guaranteed. And when I make known this Gospel, if I am ever ashamed, it is of the intellectual propositions in which men try to clothe these high spiritual truths. If I am ever shaken in my faith, it is on the side of metaphysics and philosophy. I am never ashamed nor faithless when I make a practical use of the truth as it is revealed in Christ. I never undertook to comfort one that was in distress; I never attempted to encourage one that wanted to do well, and did not know how; I never tried to act toward men as God acts toward them, that I had a doubt, and that I did not feel and know that I had touched the marrow of the Gospel. I know in whom I have believed and trusted. I know that the truth of God is a truth of love, of mercy, of recuperation, of a new life, of a life kindled in the soul. The marriage of the soul to Christ- -that is the disclosure of the Gospel. And this blessed Gospel Paul was not ashamed of. Certainly, we ought not to be ashamed of it if he was not. On the contrary, every one of us ought to be grateful for it.

It was winter. My honeysuckle had lost all its leaves. It was barren and odorless. But there came from the far south the warm and reviving sun, and called and called to the honeysuckle, and awaked its life. And it began to hold out its hands to the sun. And no sooner did the renewed sap begin to flow through its vines, than they began to exhale fragrance and thanksgiving to the sun that brought out their blossoms.

And shall you, planted in the garden of the Lord, have the blessed hope and sweet conviction that you are disenthralled from a thousand dangers, and hear your Heavenly Father's voice calling you by precious names of love and honor, without expressing as much gratitude as the vines that never forget to blossom in beauty and give thanks in fragrance? Shall God do for you what he has been doing, and have no requital? Shall you enjoy the bounty and experience, the benefit of God's love, and then hide your light under a bushel, and not let brother or sister know that you are in Christ? That name should be to you as the sound of music. Sing it. Speak it.

Proclaim it. Lift up your voice as a trumpet, and let men know in whom you hope, and why you believe you shall triumph over death, and fly above the world, and never touch its smoke, until you land in the realm of glory.

Many of you can testify that this power is not wanting yet. You are yourselves witnesses of the living power of God in Christ. And so long as the preaching of the Gospel of Christ shall make men over again, and reform society, and heal its wounds, and cleanse its sores; so long as it shall be able to set men free from temptations and enable them to cultivate sweet affections and glorious sentiments—so long none of us need be ashamed of it.

Therefore teach the Gospel. Make it known to your children. Let it be the lullaby from which the child learns tidings of God and of Christ. Let it be your theme in the household. Blend the love of the Father in heaven with the love of the father upon earth. As the child learns early to love his earthly parents, let there be an extension of his love, so that it shall love the Lord who gave himself for even the least of the little ones, to redeem him from sin, and to make him glorious as a king in the presence of God.

By this grace and by this glorious love shed abroad in our hearts, transforming us, may we all, from day to day, and from year to year, be grandly proud and triumphant, and not ashamed of this Gospel, until we stand among the shouting heavenly throng, more enthusiastic than ever in our rejoicings, in view of the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ. And in our joy, let us cast our crowns at his feet, saying, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, be the praise forever and forever."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Father, for the revelation of thyself through Jesus Christ our Lord. We bless thee that the knowledge of salvation through his grace has been brought to us, and that so many of us have been inclined to accept mercy at his hand. We thank thee that thou hast kindled in us hope, and joy, and peace in believing. We thank thee that although we have not plucked the fruits that grow by the side of the river of life yet we have had great joy and great delight even in anticipation, more than springs from the realization of earthly joy. We thank thee that all the light and air of the future falls upon our path, and that, though for a time it may be hid, the light comes again, and the darkness no longer rests upon us as it did, because thou hast spoken peace to our souls. Thou hast taught us that we are thine. Thou hast entered in to dwell with us. Thou hast been our blessed guest. Thou hast brought, universally, blessings upon us, and we are rich, since thou hast been with us. Thou hast called us by name. Thou hast known us utterly. We are reconciled to thee. Between thee and us there is no more fear. Would that there were no more disobedience and no more unbelief or doubt. Would that we could always abide as upon the top of the mountain, and behold thee in thy glory, and rejoice in the testimonies of thy divinity. And yet, even when our mind is clouded, and doubts come, though for the time it is not joyous, but grievous, yet afterward it worketh in us the peaceable fruit of righteousness. We rejoice that thou dost try us, and that our faith is put to proof, and that we must needs endure by patience, and by the sense of the invisible, and by faith in God, and not by what we can understand of God's providence. We desire to commit ourselves to thy guidance. What is there that we would withhold from thee? What treasure, what favorite plan, what friendship, what hope or joy in life, is not better for the shining of thy face upon it? We rejoice, O Lord, that we may commit all we have to thy power and wisdom, and that thou wilt overrule everything so that it shall work for good to us. Even so, blessed Saviour. Take what thou wilt away. Put what thou wilt upon us. Grant thyself, grant peace with thee, grant thy cleansing hope and thine enlightening faith, and it matters not what else our experience is below.

And now we beseech of thee that thou wilt teach us to win others, and that we may be able to give unto all whom we love, and all who are yet in the darkness of unbelief, that power by which we were made willing.

We pray that thy work may be revived in the hearts of thy people, and that it may be planted in many hearts where now is a wilderness.

O Lord, we pray that thou wilt glorify thyself in thy triumphs over thine adversaries. Redeem souls from selfishness. Redeem those who are now resisting thee and thy laws. Grant that they may be made of a better mind. May they return with repentance, and find in sorrow joys unspeakable and full of glory. We pray for thy churches, and for those that minister thy truth. In thee may their strength be from day to day. Augment their skill and power in the proclamation of the truth. May they see that their labor is not in vain. May the seed they sow spring up and bring forth a hundred fold.

We pray for thy cause in every form. We pray that wars may cease; that all the contentions of selfishness and ambition may cease; that men may no longer live by their worst side. Teach men to live, we beseech of thee, by that which allies them to God and to immortality. May ignorance be done away, and justice, and moderation of desire, and purity, and love prevail among this people, and among the nations of the earth. And make haste, we beseech of thee, to grant the fulfillment of those promises which respect the

glory of the good in the last days of the earth. Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Grant, our Father, thy blessing to rest upon the word of truth which has been spoken. Draw us by the sweetness of love into more intimate relations to thee. Give us not only the knowledge of outward things, but the better knowledge of things that come by the inward sense. Teach not only our understanding, but our moral sense. Interpret to us, by our daily experience, more and more of the mystery of God. Enter in, according to thy promise, not simply to sup with us, but to dwell and abide with us. And may we be so transformed that all our life shall be as the life of Christ, so that we may be said to be one with him. And grant that we may never be unwilling to speak for Christ. May we never shrink from his cross and shame. May we interest ourselves in every cause that is of God, and that represents the love of God, and the purity of God, and the justice of God, and the truth of God. So may we be thy faithful children indeed. And then bring us home. And may we be glad to find that we are already known in heaven, our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life. And from golden gates may there stream a multitude which shall lift up a song of gladness and rejoicing, and give us an exceeding and abundant entrance into the kingdom of thy glory. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

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